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CORPS, USFWS AND STATE FISHERIES AGENCIES STRIVE TO MAXIMIZE FISH SPAWNING

MOBILE, Ala. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the fisheries agencies from Alabama, Georgia, Florida and Mississippi have worked closely together to develop fish spawning periods for the lakes and rivers under Corps management in Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Mississippi.

Fish spawning activities are usually triggered by water temperature and other natural forces.

“The state fisheries agencies provided us with time frames when fish typically spawn for Allatoona Lake, Lake Lanier, West Point Lake, Walter F. George Lake, Lake Seminole, the Apalachicola River and Okatibbee Lake,” said E. Patrick Robbins, Chief, Public Affairs, Mobile District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “During these periods we will make every effort to keep the water level steady for a four to six week period to maximize spawning success.”

The state fisheries agencies and USFWS also requested that when a flood pulse occurs at a lake during fish spawning, we bring the levels back to the conservation pool level as rapidly as possible to prevent fish from moving into shallow waters and then being stranded. “The agencies provided us a 60-day time frame for each location,” continued Robbins. “The goal is to keep levels as steady as possible for 30 to 45 days of that period.”

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The Corps, USFWS and state fisheries agencies acknowledge that each lake is part of the over all system and couldn't be operated independently. The fishery agencies also understand the challenge of operating as a system in support of fish spawning on the Apalachicola River, which may require flow support from the upstream reservoirs.

"The interdependence of the lakes and the river as an ecosystem required the specific time frames," said Robbins. "Everyone involved understands that fish may be spawning earlier than the beginning of the period for a particular lake, but the goal is to maximize the spawning activities as much as humanly possible while still meeting flood control, hydropower, water supply and water quality needs within the system."

The fish spawning periods for the various lakes and rivers are:

Allatoona Lake	15 March – 15 May
Lake Lanier	1 April – 1 June
West Point Lake	1 April – 1 June
Walter F, George Lake	15 March – 15 May
Lake Seminole	1 March – 1 May
Okatibbee Lake	15 March – 15 May
Apalachicola River	1 April – 1 June

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